

IBA  
ΤΗΣ ΕΔΕΣΣΗΝΩΝ

ΠΡΟΣ ΜΑΡΗ ΠΕΡΣΗ

IBAS  
OF EDESSA

TO MARI THE PERSIAN

The Greek text from this document is from [Eduward Schwartz, ACO, 2.1.3, 1965, pp. 32-34.](#)

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## TO MARI THE PERSIAN

## ΠΡΟΣ ΜΑΡΗ ΠΕΡΣΗ

[32] Ἑρμηνεία ἐπιστολῆς γραφείσης παρὰ τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου ἐπισκόπου Ἰβὰ τῆς Ἑδεσσηνῶν πόλεως Μάρῃ Πέρσῃ

[727] A translation of a letter written by the most pious Ibas, bishop of the city of the Edessa, to Mari the Persian.

**Μετὰ τὰ προοίμια·** Ἐν συντόμῳ δὲ τῇ συνέσει σου τῇ φωτεινῇ τῇ δι' ὀλίγων τὰ πολλὰ ἐπιγινωσκούσῃ, οἷα πρὸ τούτου καὶ νῦν ἐνταῦθα ἐγένετο, γνωρίσαι σοι ἐσπουδάσαμεν, εἰδότες ὡς ταῦτα τῇ σῇ θεοσεβείᾳ γράφοντες πᾶσιν διὰ τῆς σῆς σπουδῆς τοῖς ἐκείσε γνῶριμα γίνεται τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν ὡς οὐδεμίαν ἐναλλαγὴν αἱ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ δοθεῖσαι γραφαὶ ἔλαβον.

**After the epistolary opening,** It is to Your Brilliant Intelligence, which can fully comprehend many things with [only] a few words, that we strive to succinctly inform you of what happened here [both] earlier and currently. For we know that by writing this to Your Godliness our claim will become known to everyone there through your effort, that the God-given scriptures have admitted no alteration.

ποιούμαι δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἐκ τῶν λόγων ὧν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπίστασαι. ἐγένετο φιλονεικία ἐξ οὐπερ ἡ σὴ θεοσέβεια ἐνταῦθα ἦν, τοῖς δύο ἀνθρώποις τούτοις, Νεστορίῳ καὶ Κυρίλλῳ, καὶ σύνεγραψαν κατ' ἀλλήλων λόγους βλαβερούς, οἵτινες σκάνδαλον ἦσαν τοῖς ἀκούουσι. Νεστόριος γὰρ εἴρηκεν ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῦ λόγοις, καθὼς καὶ ἡ σὴ θεοσέβεια ἐπίσταται, ὅτι ἡ μακαρία Μαρία θεοτόκος οὐκ ἐστίν, ὡς νομισθῆναι τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐκ τῆς αἰρέσεως Παύλου τοῦ Σαμοσατέως αὐτὸν εἶναι τοῦ φάσκοντος ἀνθρώπου ψιλὸν εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν. Κύριλλος δὲ θέλων τοὺς λόγους Νεστορίου ἀνατρέψαι ὥλισθεν καὶ εὐρέθη ἐμπίπτων εἰς τὸ δόγμα Ἀπολλιναρίου.

I'll begin my account with narratives that you yourself know well. A conflict has broken out since Your Godliness was last here between these two people, Nestorius and Cyril, and they composed harmful arguments against each other, which caused those who heard them to stumble. Indeed, as Your Godliness also understands, Nestorius said in his arguments that the blessed Mary is not Theotokos, and consequently many people considered him to belong to the heresy of Paul of Samosata, who said that Christ is a mere human being. But in his desire to refute Nestorius's arguments, Cyril lapsed and was found to have fallen into the teaching of Apollinarius.

συνέγραψε γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁμοίως ἐκείνῳ ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ὁ λόγος γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, ὡς μὴ εἶναι διαφορὰν μεταξὺ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἐνοικούντος ἐν αὐτῷ. συνέγραψε γὰρ τὰ δώδεκα κεφάλαια, ἅπερ νομίζω καὶ τὴν σὴν θεοσέβειαν ἐγνωκέναι, ὅτι μία φύσις ἐστὶ τῆς τε θεότητος καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ὡς οὐ χρή, φησί, διαίρειν τὰς φωνὰς τὰς εἰρημένας, ἃς ἡ αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος περὶ ἑαυτοῦ εἶρηκεν ἢ οἱ εὐαγγελισταὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ. πόσης δὲ ἀσεβείας πεπλήρωται ταῦτα, καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ἡμᾶς εἰπεῖν [ὡς καὶ] ἡ σὴ ἀγιωσύνη ἐπίσταται. πῶς γὰρ δυνατὸν ληφθῆναι τὸν ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγον ἐπὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐκ Μαρίας ἢ ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἡλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους περὶ τῆς θεότητος τοῦ μονογενοῦς ῥηθῆναι;

ἡ γὰρ ἐκκλησία οὕτως λέγει, ὡς καὶ ἡ σὴ θεοσέβεια ἐπίσταται καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐδιδάχθη καὶ ἐστηρίχθη [33] τῇ θεΐᾳ διδασκαλίᾳ ἐκ τῶν λόγων τῶν μακαρίων πατέρων, δύο φύσεις, μία δύναμις, ἐν πρόσωπον, ὅπερ ἐστὶν εἰς υἱὸς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

διὰ ταύτην τὴν φιλονεικίαν οἱ νικηταὶ καὶ εὐσεβεῖς βασιλεῖς ἐκέλευσαν τοὺς ἐξάρχους τῶν ἐπισκόπων εἰς τὴν Ἐφεσίων πόλιν συναχθῆναι καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων τοὺς λόγους Νεστορίου καὶ Κυρίλλου κριθῆναι. πρὸ τοῦ δὲ πάντας τοὺς ἐπισκόπους τοὺς κελευσθέντας συναχθῆναι ἐλθεῖν εἰς τὴν Ἐφεσον προλαβὼν ὁ αὐτὸς Κύριλλος τὰς (ἀπάντων) ἀκοὰς τῷ φαρμάκῳ τῷ πηροῦντι τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῶν σοφῶν προκατέσχευεν· εὗρεν δὲ αἰτίαν ἐκ τοῦ μίσους τοῦ πρὸς Νεστόριον.

πρὸ τοῦ εἰς τὴν σύνοδον παραγενέσθαι τὸν ἀγιώτατον καὶ θεοφιλέστατον ἀρχιεπίσκοπον Ἰωάννην ἐκ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς τὸν Νεστόριον καθεῖλον κρίσεως καὶ ζητήσεως μὴ γενομένης. μετὰ δὲ δύο ἡμέρας τῆς τούτου καθαιρέσεως ἦλθομεν εἰς Ἐφεσον καὶ μαθόντων ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐν τῇ καθαιρέσει Νεστορίου τῇ γενομένῃ παρ' αὐτῶν τὰ δώδεκα κεφάλαια τὰ συγγραφέντα παρὰ Κυρίλλου ἐναντία ὄντα τῇ πίστει τῇ ἀληθινῇ ἀνέθηκαν καὶ ἐβεβαίωσαν καὶ συνέθεντο αὐτοῖς ὡς τῇ ἀληθινῇ πίστει συμφωνοῦσι, πάντες οἱ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς ἐπίσκοποι αὐτὸν Κύριλλον καθεῖλον καὶ κατὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπισκόπων τῶν

Yes, Cyril even wrote like Apollinarius, that God the Word himself became a human [728] being in such a way that there was no difference between the temple and the one who dwelled within it. Indeed, he wrote in the Twelve Chapters,' as I would guess Your Godliness knows, that there is one nature of the divinity and the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the result that it isn't necessary, he claims, to distinguish the sayings that were said, either the ones the Lord spoke about himself or those the evangelists [spoke] about him. Even before we say it, Your Holiness will know the degree of impiety that these words have ginned up. For how can "In the beginning was the Word" be taken to refer to the temple begotten from Mary, or how can "You have made him a little less than the angels" be said about the divinity of the Only-Begotten?

Indeed, as even Your Godliness understands, and was both taught and confirmed by the divine teaching from the words of the blessed fathers from the beginning, the church speaks like this: two natures, one power, one person, who is one Son Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of that conflict, the victorious and pious emperors commanded that the leading bishops be convened in the city of the Ephesians, and the arguments of Nestorius and Cyril be judged by all. But before all the bishops who were commanded to be convened had come to Ephesus, the same Cyril took the initiative and preempted the trial of everything with a magic spell that blinded the eyes of the wise. He found a pretext in [his] hatred for Nestorius.

Even before the most holy and God-beloved archbishop John arrived at the synod, they deposed Nestorius from the episcopate with neither trial nor investigation. Two days after his deposition, though, we came to Ephesus; when we learned that, at the deposition of Nestorius that they enacted, they referred to and confirmed the Twelve Chapters that Cyril had authored, which stood contrary to the true faith, and assented to them as if they were harmonious with the true faith, all the Eastern bishops' deposed Cyril himself and decreed an order

συνθεμένων τοῖς κεφαλαίοις ἀκοινωνήσαν ὥρισαν. καὶ μετὰ ταύτην τὴν ἀταξίαν ἕκαστος εἰς τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὑπέστρεψε. Νεστόριος δὲ ἐπειδὴ ἐμισεῖτο παρὰ τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῶν μεγάλων τῶν ὄντων ἐν αὐτῇ, ἐκεῖ ὑποστρέψαι οὐκ ἠδυνήθη. καὶ ἔμεινεν ἡ σύνοδος ἡ Ἀνατολικὴ μὴ κοινωνοῦσα τοῖς ἐπισκόποις τοῖς κοινωνήσασιν Κυρίλλῳ. καὶ διὰ ταῦτα λύπη πολλή μεταξὺ αὐτῶν ἐγένετο καὶ ἐν φιλονεικίαι ἐπίσκοποι πρὸς ἐπίσκοπους ἐγένοντο καὶ λαοὶ πρὸς λαοὺς καὶ τὰ γεγραμμένα ἔργῳ ἐπληρώθη ὅτι ἔστωσαν ἐχθροὶ (τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) οἱ οἰκειακοὶ αὐτοῦ.

καὶ ἐκ τούτου λοιδορίαι πολλαὶ καθ' ἡμῶν ἐγένοντο Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ αἰρετικῶν. οὐ γὰρ ἐτόλμα τις ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν ἢ ἀπὸ χώρας εἰς χώραν ἀπέρχεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἕκαστος τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἐχθρὸν ἐδίωκεν πολλοὶ δὲ μὴ ἔχοντες φόβον θεοῦ πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν [ἡ] προφάσει ζήλου τοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἦν εἶχον ἔχθραν κεκρυμμένην ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν, εἰς ἔργον ἀγαγεῖν ἐσπούδασαν. εἰς ἐξ αὐτῶν τυγχάνει ὁ τῆς ἡμετέρας πόλεως τύραννος, ὃν καὶ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἀγνοεῖς, ὅστις προφάσει τῆς πίστεως οὐ μόνον τοὺς ζῶντας ἀμύνεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς πάλαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον ἀπεληλυθότας.

ὧν εἰς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ὁ μακάριος Θεόδωρος ὁ κήρυξ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ διδάσκαλος τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ὃς οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ τοὺς αἰρετικούς ἐκολάφισεν εἰς τὴν ἀληθινὴν αὐτοῦ πίστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετὰ θάνατον ὄπλον πνευματικὸν ἐν τοῖς συντάγμασιν αὐτοῦ τοῖς τέκνοις τῆς ἐκκλησίας κατέλειψεν, ὡς καὶ ἡ σὴ θεοσέβεια αὐτῷ συντυχούσα ἔγνω καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν συγγραφέων παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπέισθη. τοῦτον ἐτόλμησεν ὁ πάντα τολμῶν ἐπ' ἐκκλησίας φανερώς ἀναθεματίσαι τὸν διὰ ζήλον θεοῦ οὐ μόνον τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν ἐκ τῆς πλάνης εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐπιστρέψαντα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς μακρὰν οὖσας ἐκκλησίας παιδεύσαντα τῇ αὐτοῦ διδασκαλίᾳ. καὶ περὶ τῶν βιβλίων αὐτοῦ πολλή ἔρευνα πανταχοῦ ἐγένετο οὐ διὰ τὸ τῇ πίστει τῇ ἀληθινῇ ἁλλοτρίας αὐτὰς εἶναι (ἰδοὺ γὰρ ζώντος αὐτοῦ συνεχῶς αὐτὸν ἐπῆναι καὶ εἰς τὰ βιβλία αὐτοῦ ἀνεγίνωσκεν), ἀλλὰ [34] διὰ τὴν ἔχθραν τὴν κεκρυμμένην ἣν εἶχεν πρὸς αὐτόν, ἐπειδὴ ἠλεγξεν αὐτόν φανερώς ἐν τῇ συνόδῳ.

of excommunication against the other bishops who had assented to the Chapters. And after this mess each returned to his respective city, but Nestorius could not return to his city since it and its bigwigs hated him. The Easterners' synod continued [729] to refuse communion with those bishops who were in communion with Cyril. Because of these things, a great deal of misery arose between them, with bishops in conflict with bishops and faction with faction. In the deed, the scriptures were fulfilled: "Let a person's enemies be his housemates."

From this point pagans and heretics issued many reproaches against us. Indeed, no one dared to travel from one city to another or from one place to another, but each persecuted his neighbor as an enemy. Many, who did not keep the fear of God before their eyes, or with the pretense of zeal that they had for their churches, strived to put into action the hatred concealed in their heart. One of these turned out to be the despot of our city' — even you are not ignorant about him! — who, under the pretense of faith, exacted vengeance not only on the living, but also on those who long ago departed for the Lord.

One of these was the blessed Theodore, herald of truth and teacher of the church, who not only during his life pummeled heretics into his true faith, but even after death left to the church's children a spiritual weapon in his treatises, as Your Godliness also knows, you who kept his company and were persuaded by the works written by him. He who dared all these things dared publicly in church to anathematize him who not only turned his own city from error to the truth out of his zeal for God, but also educated faraway churches with his teaching. And concerning his books, an exhaustive inquiry took place everywhere, not because they were alien to the true faith (for, really, while [Theodore] was living, [Rabbula] would frequently praise him and read his books), but because of his concealed hatred that he had for him, since he rebuked him publicly in the synod.

τούτων δὲ τῶν κακῶν μεταξύ [αὐτῶν] γινομένων καὶ ἑκάστου ὡς ἐβούλετο κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον ἀπιόντος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ὁ προσκυνητὸς ὁ πάντοτε τῇ φιλάνθρωπῃ αὐτοῦ φροντίζων τῆς ἐκκλησίας διήγειρεν τοῦ πιστοτάτου καὶ νικητοῦ βασιλέως τὴν καρδίαν πέμψαι ἄνδρα μέγαν καὶ γνώριμον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου παλατίου ἀναγκάζοντα τὸν ἀγιώτατον ἀρχιεπίσκοπον τῆς Ἀνατολῆς τὸν κύριον Ἰωάννην διαλλαγῆναι Κυρίλλῳ· ὅπ' αὐτοῦ γὰρ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς καθήρητο. καὶ μετὰ τὸ δέξασθαι τὰ γράμματα τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἀγιώτατον καὶ θεοφιλέστατον Παῦλον τὸν ἐπίσκοπον Ἐμίσης γράψας δι' αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀληθινὴν πίστιν καὶ παραγγείλας αὐτῷ ὅτι εἰ ταύτῃ τῇ πίστει σύνθῃται Κύριλλος καὶ ἀναθεματίσει τοὺς λέγοντας ὅτι ἡ θεότης ἔπαθεν, καὶ τοὺς λέγοντας ὅτι μία φύσις ἐστὶ θεότητος καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος, ἵνα αὐτῷ κοινωνήσῃ.

ἐβουλήθη δὲ ὁ κύριος ὁ πάντοτε φροντίζων τῆς ἰδίας αὐτοῦ ἐκκλησίας τῆς τῷ ἰδίῳ αὐτοῦ αἵματι λυτρωθείσης καὶ τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου μαλάξαι καὶ ἐκτὸς σκύψεως τῇ πίστει συνθέσθαι καὶ ταύτην δέξασθαι καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἐκτὸς ταύτης πιστεύοντας ἀναθεματίσαι. καὶ κοινωνησάντων ἀλλήλοις ἡ φιλονεικία ἐκ μέσου ἦρθη καὶ εἰρήνη ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ γέγονεν καὶ οὐκέτι λοιπὸν ἐν αὐτῇ σχίσμα, ἀλλὰ εἰρήνη ὡς τὸ πρότερον ἐστὶ.

τίνα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ ῥήματα τὰ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου καὶ θεοφιλεστάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἰωάννου γραφέντα καὶ ποῖα ἀντίγραφα ἐδέξατο παρὰ Κυρίλλου, αὐτὰς τὰς ἐπιστολάς ταύτῃ τῇ πρὸς τὴν σὴν θεοσέβειαν συζεύξας ἀπέστειλα τῇ σῇ ὁσιότητι, ἵνα ἀναγνοὺς γνῶις καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἡμῶν τοὺς τὴν εἰρήνην φιλοῦντας εὐαγγελίσῃ ὅτι ἡ φιλονεικία λοιπὸν πέπαυται καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον ἦρθη τῆς ἔχθρας καὶ οἱ ἀτάκτως κατὰ ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν ἐπελθόντες ἐν αἰσχύνῃ εἰσὶν, ἀπολογούμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων πταισμάτων καὶ ἐναντία τῇ πρώτῃ αὐτῶν διδαχῇ διδάσκοντες.

While these evil things took place among them, and each departed however he wanted, as it is written, our venerable God, who in his lovingkindness is always concerned for the church, inspired the heart of the most faithful and victorious emperor to send a great and well-known courtier to compel the most holy archbishop of the East, lord John, to be reconciled with Cyril. For he had deposed [Cyril] from the episcopate. After receiving the emperor's letter, [John] dispatched the most holy and God-beloved Paul, bishop of Emesa; he wrote through him the true faith and commanded him to enter into communion with [Cyril], so long as Cyril assented to this faith and anathematized those who say that the divinity suffered and [730] those who say that there is one nature of the divinity and the humanity.

But the Lord, who is always concerned for his own church that was redeemed with his own blood, chose to soften the Egyptian's heart too, so that even he assented to the faith without irritation, accepted it, and anathematized all those who believed outside of [the true church]. And once they entered into communion with each other, the conflict was taken from their midst; there was peace in the church and no longer did a schism remain in it, but peace was there as previously.

As to what the words were that the most holy and God-beloved archbishop John wrote, and as to how he accepted Cyril's response, I have sent to Your Sanctity the letters themselves as an appendix [to this letter] for Your Godliness so that, by reading them, you may know and proclaim to all our peace-loving brothers that the conflict has finally ceased, that the wall between enemies has come down, and that those who, with no discipline, came against the living and the dead now stand in shame, accounting for their shortcomings and teaching points contrary to their initial teaching.

## IBAS OF EDESSA - IBA THΣ ΕΔΕΣΣΗΝΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ τολμᾷ τις εἰπεῖν ὅτι μία ἐστὶ φύσις θεότητος καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος, ἀλλὰ ὁμολογοῦσιν εἰς τὸν ναὸν καὶ εἰς τὸν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνοικοῦντα ὄντα ἓνα υἱὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. ταῦτα δὲ ἔγραψα τῇ σῇ θεοσεβείᾳ ἐκ πολλῆς διαθέσεως ἧς ἔχω πρὸς σε, πεπεισμένος ὡς ἡ σὴ ἀγιωσύνη νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ σαυτὸν γυμνάζεις, ἵνα πολλοὺς ὠφελήσῃς.

For no one dares say that there is one nature of the divinity and the humanity; rather, they confess [their belief] in the temple and in the one who dwells in it, the one Son, Jesus Christ. I am writing these words to Your Godliness with the tremendous affection that I have for you, convinced that Your Holiness is training yourself in God's teaching, night and day, so that you might benefit many.